

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 19, 24-26, 28, 29, 32, 36, and 41 are pending. Claims 27 and 30 have been canceled. Claim 41 has been added. Claims 26, 28, and 36 have been amended.

The final Office Action mailed April 25, 2003 allows claims 19, 24, and 25. Claims 26-30, 32, and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants have amended claim 26 to further clarify the claim and to incorporate all the features of claims 27 and 30. New claim 41 has been added to set forth subject matter deleted from claim 26. Claims 28 and 36 have been amended to correct their dependencies. No new matter has been added. The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

The prior Office Action mailed November 12, 2002 indicated that claim 31 contained allowable subject matter (please note that claim 31 had been previously amended on July 24, 2001). Applicants have now incorporated claim 31, including the verbatim language from intervening claims 27 and 30, into independent claim 26. Applicants have made only minor changes in the claim language formerly contained within claim 31 so as to obviate the §112, second paragraph rejection.

In particular, the Examiner stated that claim 26 is unclear because "the listed gases do not contain S and P; the claims now require one gas which contains both of these elements" (final Office Action, p. 2, lines 6-7). Claim 26 now sets forth that "the catalytic gas contains at least one of a sulfur compound or a phosphorous compound." Moreover, applicants have removed the list of compounds containing sulfur or phosphorous to new claim 41 so as to clarify the scope of claim 26. Therefore, applicants submit that the §112, second paragraph rejection is obviated.


In line with the Examiner's prior comments (see final Office Action, p. 2, lines 8-10), independent claim 26 remains patentable over Foster because that reference still does not show or suggest applicants' combination of features, particularly, applicants' requirement for the catalytic gas to contain at least one of a sulfur or phosphorous compound.

In view of the foregoing, applicants submit that the §112, second paragraph rejection is obviated and that independent claim 26 is patentable over Foster. Claims 27-30, 32, and 36 are patentable at least because they depend from claim 26.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 415-576-0200.

Respectfully submitted,


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